

Eric's New Pegasos

If you've actually been keeping up with what I write in my column, (and who hasn't?) you might know about my struggle with patience to acquire a Pegasos II computer system. My goal was to get one before the end of the year (2003 in this case), and my goals were met with success... just barely. The Pegasos motherboard arrived mere days before the new year. I was actually surprised by that fact. Cramming the board, along with all the supporting hardware I bought into a case wasn't too difficult, though a few things are missing or don't fit from my case, like a reset button or a power LED. I was more interested in getting the system up than lining up all the details though. After getting the system set up and running on MorphOS, I learned of a firmware bug that makes the system unbootable if you change the 'ware's environment variables – right after I had just done so. For about half a day I had a very expensive paper-weight until I could scrape together the necessary stuff to rectify the problem. (I am very glad it was rectifiable, by the way.) One firmware update later, I had MorphOS running as well as autobooting, and in general, I am quite impressed, if not exactly fawning over the new machine (yet).

MorphOS and its "Ambient" working environment (which I keep calling Workbench) have amazing potential, but so far all it's really trying to do is be a fast, pretty, relatively no-frills Amiga clone. There are differences of course, an obvious one being the menus, which unlike standard Amiga menus are divided between some screen-top menus and context-sensitive ones, giving you

different options depending on whether the pointer is over a window or an icon. I was constantly messing up by following the Amiga convention for these menus, and now I'm split, trying to treat Amiga menus as Morph ones as well. There's not a lot of really useful software for MorphOS yet, limited to many of the Morph and PPC-specific utilities found online, and whatever Amiga software you can get working. Thanks to "Trance," the JIT 680x0 emulation system, Morph can run some Amiga software at better than full speed, IF you can get it running properly at all. Morph seems to be picky about a lot of Amiga software, especially if it tries to tap into the Amiga chipset or has any custom tricks in its graphic interface. I've had less than stellar luck trying to get my favorite software to work correctly, though the odds are in your favor if your software uses MUI. I have gotten a few Morph-specific things that really show off the power of the 1 Ghz G4 processor, and naturally, they're games. Quake is most impressive, running at the same speed on a 1024 x 768 screen as the Amiga and its 200 Mhz PPC can at 320 x 240. MAME can emulate several arcade games at speeds my Amiga could never have hoped for as well. I can see the power, but now I need more software that can really make use of it.

It's not all about software woes,

as there are some bright spots. FXPaint lite is included, and while it needs some work, it could be a stunning piece of image-working software on-par with Photogenics. There are other apps included with the "Superbundle" software pack, all showing potential... all lite versions of software that offer upgrades to the full versions. Birdie Shoot is surprisingly fun though. I'm not regretting my purchase in the least or at all worried about any OS shortcomings or lack of software. At the rate things appear to be going, that will change soon enough. Even if they didn't, there's always the options of running Linux or Macintosh (on Linux). About the only thing the Pegasos can't do is a licensed Amiga OS, a situation which may change eventually, or Windows, which is most probably a good thing.

Be sure to be at the January meeting if you are at all interested in the Pegasos II. There will be at least one system there, probably two, so January 17 would be an excellent time to see one in person, and get a question or two answered. See you there!

*...Eric Schwartz
AmiTech-Dayton Gazette
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Food For Thought

- What was the best thing before sliced bread?
- One nice thing about egotists: they don't talk about other people.
- Do infants enjoy infancy as much as adults enjoy adultery?
- How is it possible to have a civil war?
- If the "blackbox" flight recorder is never damaged during a plane crash, why isn't the whole damn airplane made out of that stuff?

- If you ate pasta and antipasta, would you still be hungry?
- If you try to fail, and succeed, which have you done?

Items of Interest

There are two things I wanted to relay in the newsletter:

The online swapmeet as it were of Amiga items and where I found my ethernet card is...
<http://www.amibench.com>

AmigaMCCC News

MCCC
P.O. Box 813
Bedford, Texas 76095

Please Forward
Address Correction Requested

<http://www.amigamccc.org>

February Calendar

February 9 — Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:30 pm — University Center, Pedernales Room
W. First St. & S. West St., Arlington

February 9 — MCCC Board of Director's Meeting
Approx. 10:00 pm — TGI Fridays
Cooper Street just south of I-20, Arlington

February 19 — Amiga North Dallas Chapter
7:30 pm — Junkins Building, SMU
Dyer and Airline Extension Rd., Dallas

February 28 — Newsletter Deadline — 7:00 am

Also, there is still one Commodore support BBS in the area...

THE MARSDEN BBS
972-276-6721

There is a message base on there called "All things Amiga." It could make a nice out of the way place for discussion.

...Greg Goodwin